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INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES PRIORITY
RUCNOSC/OSCE POST COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST PRIORITY 0088
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY 0035
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0067
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [EUN](#) [BO](#) [EI](#)
SUBJECT: BELARUS: IRELAND SUPPORTS U.S.-EU COORDINATION,
BUT CAUTIONS ON FINANCIAL SANCTIONS

REF: STATE 38953

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Jonathan Benton; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[¶1.](#) (SBU) Ireland agrees strongly with U.S. points on the continuing importance of U.S.-EU coordination in the run-up to, and aftermath of, the March 19 presidential election in Belarus, according to Ruadhri Dowling, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) First Secretary for Russia and Eastern Europe, to whom emboff delivered reftel demarche on March 14. Dowling cited EU statements highlighting the international community's serious concerns about the Belarus government's conduct in the pre-election period. He pointed out that Ireland had earlier assigned one longer-term observer, a university lecturer, to the ODIHR monitoring mission and would send ten more observers for the election, including a DFA official.

[¶2.](#) (C) In terms of possible U.S.-EU post-electoral responses to the Belarusian Government's misconduct, Dowling noted Irish support for the expansion of visa restrictions, an option already under EU consideration. He cautioned, however, that financial sanctions, such as freezing the personal assets of Belarusian officials, would be more problematic. He elaborated that such sanctions could not be implemented quickly and, perhaps worse, might not be effective. The unintended result, he added, would be to diminish U.S. and EU prestige within Belarus. Dowling concluded that the EU would nevertheless continue to examine this option in coordination with the USG.
BENTON